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PAGE 01 STATE 140125

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TO USINT BAGHDAD

INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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SUBJ: PRESS INTERVIEW WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN

1. SUMMARY. JULY 15 EDITIONS OF NEW YORK TIMES AND
WASHINGTON POST REPORTED EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH IRAQI
REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL (RCC) VICE PRESIDENT SADDAM
HUSSEIN. IN JULY 13 INTERVIEW HUSSEIN INDICATED DESIRE TO
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PAGE 02 STATE 140125

IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE WEST; STRESSED IRAQ'S NEUTRAL

AND INDEPENDENT POSITION IN INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES; EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER IRAN'S INTENTIONS IN THE GULF AND IRAN'S ARMS BUILDUP; FORECAST THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL PARLIAMENT AND SWIFTER KURDISH PROGRESS TO AUTONOMY BY NEXT MARCH. END SUMMARY.

2. IN JULY 13 INTERVIEW WITH WESTERN JOURNALISTS IN BAGHDAD RCC VICE PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN AL TAKRITI INDICATED THAT IRAQ DOES NOT WANT ALIGNMENT WITH EAST OR WEST BUT HOPES TO "BE NEUTRAL BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS." ALTHOUGH HUSSEIN VIEWS CURRENT US AND UK POLICY AS HOSTILE, HE SAID "IRAQ WOULD WELCOME MOVES BY THE U.S. AND BRITAIN THAT COULD LEAD TO NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS." HUSSEIN WAS MORE OPTIMISTIC CONCERNING THE POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS WITH THE UK THAN WITH THE U.S. BECAUSE "BRITAIN'S STANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST CAN BE FAR LESS RIGID" AND "THE U.S. IS SEEN AS DEEPLY AND UNALTERABLY PRO-ISRAEL" (WASHINGTON POST). THERE WAS NO SUGGESTION DURING THE INTERVIEW THAT IRAQ WANTS TO DEPRIVE THE WEST OF ITS OIL RESOURCES. HUSSEIN TOLD NEWSMEN THAT "IRAQ CANNOT DRINK OIL, AND OUR MARKETS ARE THE WEST AND JAPAN." HUSSEIN PLAYED DOWN THE IMPORTANCE OF IRAQ'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION WHICH THE WASHINGTON-POST STATED IS "ECONOMICALLY PRACTICAL AND POLITICALLY LIMITED."

2. NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE REPORTS HUSSEIN AS SAYING "THE SECURITY OF AMERICAN OIL SUPPLIES FROM THE MIDDLE EAST WOULD BE BETTER SERVED BY DEVELOPING FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH ARAB PRODUCERS THAN BY ARMING ISRAEL AND IRAN." BOTH THE TIMES AND POST ARTICLES EMPHASIZED HUSSEIN'S CONCERN OVER IRAN'S LARGE PURCHASES OF AMERICAN AND BRITISH MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND OVER IRAN'S SEIZURE OF THREE ISLANDS AT THE MOUTH OF THE GULF (ABU MUSA, GREATER AND LESSER TUNB). HUSSEIN SAID IRAN MUST WITHDRAW FROM THE ISLANDS OR NEGOTIATE A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT WITH THE ARAB EMIRATES ON THE FUTURE OF THE ISLANDS. HE INFORMED NEWSMEN THAT RECENT CONTACTS WITH IRAN HAD PRODUCED "NO POSITIVE RESULTS" AND "THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE IN IRAN'S PEACEFUL INTENTIONS." THE N.Y. TIMES REPORTED HIM AS SAYING, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WERE "STILL MANY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 140125

CHANCES TO ESTABLISH A BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP IF IRAN CHANGES HER ATTITUDE."

3. HUSSEIN TALKED OF THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL PARLIAMENT TO ACHIEVE "A HEALTHY CONSENSUS." HE ANNOUNCED A NEW AGREEMENT WITH THE IRAQI COMMUNIST PARTY. THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL IS TO REMAIN THE SUPREME AUTHORITY IN IRAQ, AND EXCLUSIVELY BA'ATHIST, BUT IT WILL BE EN-

LARGED.

4. HUSSEIN ALSO FORECAST KURDISH PROGRESS TO AUTONOMY BY NEXT MARCH. THE WASHINGTON POST REPORTS KURDS BLAMED NAZIM KAZZAR, WHO WAS "WIDELY CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN A VIRTUAL PSYCHOPATH," FOR INCIDENTS BETWEEN THE KURDS AND IRAQI SECURITY FORCES. THE POST ARTICLE GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT NOW THAT KAZZAR HAS BEEN ELIMINATED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE KURDS AND THE BA'ATH PARTY MAY IMPROVE. RUSH

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